Chris Coelho

TELL Project

Throughout my first semester at college in my writing class we have been discussing what it means to be educated. We’ve came to the conclusion there is no narrow definition to the meaning, and people’s opinions could differ from each other. However, from hearing all of these definitions it has opened my eyes and made me realize how past and present experiences mold the person they are and education they have, which influences the future for them. There are very specific events that I remember that made me the person I am today. In the past, when I got arrested, in the present, when I met my girlfriend, and in the future when we move to California together. They are all connected in creating who I am and who I want to be. The events that have happen in my life have done more for my education than any school could ever do.

In the past, I was a rebel after my parents got divorced and I lived with my mom. Whenever she would tell me to do something I wouldn’t listen, I had been getting bad grades in school, I never did homework, and I would do drugs with my friends at the time. She was not aware of me doing any sort of drugs besides over the counter medications when I would be sick, until she read my text messages one day. She freaked out at me, drug tested me, and I was grounded for what felt like an eternity but was only a month. As soon as that month was over I went right back to my old ways, continuing to lie to my mom and telling her that I stopped and had learned my lesson. She trusted my word and since I was 18 she felt I was old enough to stay home alone over the weekend while she went to Florida on vacation with her boyfriend. I was so excited that I would be home alone, with no rules or anything for a solid 3 days. It was all I could think about, I felt like a child on Christmas Eve. She left Friday morning after I went to school, which led to me telling all my friends that I had my house to myself for the weekend. Right after school all my friends came over and we hung out and did exactly what my mother despised. Almost everybody left around 9:00pm and my friend Ethan and I decided we would get a bite to eat at McDonalds in town because we were starving. We got in his car and took off to McDonalds. Right after we ordered from the drive through and were waiting for our food at the next window, we realized there was a cop sitting behind us, not in line or ordering food, just creeping behind us. Since we were both ‘high’ we instantly started sketching out thinking that we were going to get pulled over and arrested, all terrible scenarios were going through our head. However, we did not think we could actually get in trouble because the paraphernalia and marijuana was in the trunk, which they cannot search unless they find something in the front part of the car. I could not stop shaking because I was so scared, it was easily the most scared I have ever been in my whole life. It felt like hours have passed since we ordered and were waiting for our food. The cop just sat behind us waiting until we pulled out so he could pull us over. Right when we got our food handed to us he sped past our car and into the mall parking lot across the street. We both let out a huge sigh of relief and started driving back to my house. As soon as we pulled out of the McDonalds the cop whipped a quick U turn and turned his lights on instantly to pull us over. The shaking started all over again as we sat on the side of the road with the cop lights on behind us. When he came up to the car he said he could smell marijuana, which I thought was impossible because it was in the trunk and we hadn’t smoked in the car, therefore that was probable cause to search the car. I wasn’t that worried because all of our stuff was in the trunk which he couldn’t look in, until I saw him pull something from the center console and start walking back towards us. He found a bowl in the center console that I had no idea was there and my friend forgot was there. After he found that he had the right to search the whole car, so he found our stuff in the trunk too. We knew we were going to get arrested now, which was terrifying, not only getting handcuffed and taken to the police station, but what my mom would do to me. This event had taught me that I’m not invincible and that if you get caught doing something bad by somebody that doesn’t legally punish you, to take it more seriously, or else the law will punish you.

This leads to my present event, which is meeting my girlfriend at Bloomsburg University. It all started with going to college in the first place. All of the freedom that I was given caused me to get into the same bad things I did at home that lead me to getting arrested. When I first came to BU I roomed with my two friends I went to high school with, so I didn’t really branch out to meet new people as much as somebody who knew nobody would. For the first couple weeks of school I would just hang out with them all the time, if I had class and they didn’t, I would skip it just to hang out with them. It got to the point where I didn’t care about school at all, I would only show up for tests, do little to no homework at all, and I would never study. This led my grades to be very ugly; the road I was on would cause me to get kicked out of BU. However, some good came from this whole situation, and that was meeting Annie Neff. I will never forget the first time I saw her while I was walking to the shower, her door was open and she was sitting on her bed wearing a blue long sleeve shirt and jeans, watching TV and on her laptop at the same time. I smiled and she waved and that was the extent of our first interaction. I didn’t get to talk to her until one weekend night when I came back to the dorms drunk and the cops were walking in the hallway. As soon as I saw them I went to go towards the bathroom because I would have had to walk past them to get to my room, and Annie’s door was open. She had saw the cops too so she pulled me in and shut the door because she didn’t want to deal with cops either because she was intoxicated too. That was the first time I had actually had a conversation with her which was great. While I was in there I ended up getting her number and bonding over the fact that we liked the same type of music. Over the next couple weeks we talked a lot more and eventually started hanging out on a daily basis as friends. She realized my habits and how bad my grades had to have been due to me never going to classes or even doing work. While we were sitting in her room alone one day she confronted me about my schoolwork, which leads to us having a heart to heart conversation about my life and how bad I was actually doing in school. She opened my eyes to how badly I was messing up the rest of my life with the stupid decisions I was making now. Meanwhile my roommates weren’t doing well in school either, so they both decided to go home for the spring semester to attend a community college. Toward the end of the semester I got my life together and started going to all my classes and doing work for them. It felt amazing to look on bolt and see an A on a psychology test rather than the typical D or F. I ended the semester with a 1.4 gpa rather than the 0.5 that I had when I first met Annie. While my roommates went home for the spring semester, I decided to stay and room with another kid in my hall whose roommate went home for the spring. That was the best decision of my life because I got to spend every single day with Annie and better my college education by attending a state school rather than a community college. Without Annie I would either be attending a community college, or working a low paying job trying to pay off the fall semester at Bloomsburg University.

With the way I have been molded by my past events I have a picture of what I want my future to be like. I reflect on all of the wrong paths I have taken and think about how everything could have been different for me. I’ve realized that I cannot change my past but use it as a learning experience that pushes me to strive to do better in my future. I plan on having a bright future that eliminates all of the negative influences of my past. For starters I would love to continue my relationship with my girlfriend. She is the only consistent factor in my life right now and I would like to keep that way. After we have both graduated from school, her with a degree in early childhood and special education and me with a degree in digital forensics, I would love to marry her. My family approves of her because they know how much of a positive influence she is on me. Bringing our families together as one will be interesting considering we come from very different backgrounds; however I am willing to take on the challenge. I see it as another learning experience for all of us.

A second thing I would like to accomplish in my future is moving to California with Annie after we have gotten married. We would both love to move to the west coast for many reasons. One being that we love the climate there it is beautiful considering there is little to no humidity, unlike in Pennsylvania. A second reason for wanting to move there is because of our professions. The west coast is full of large technology corporations. This will aid in my search to find a first job. In addition Annie would love to be an elementary special education teacher and in the state of Pennsylvania there are limited job openings for teachers. In California there are more open positions for teachers. This leads me to my third goal I would like to accomplish in my future. While living in California I would like to find a stable job. In my ideal situation I would like to use my degree in order to find a computer analyst position. I will graduate with a Bachelor’s degree from this university. Considering that it would be my first job I will take what I can get. As long as it allows me to get by finically with Annie it will be fine. I understand that no one will automatically get their dream job. You start at the bottom and work your way to the top, which is the exact road I feel as my life has taken. I now have this life lesson under my belt, that I had to learn the hard way, which I could rely to my kids one day, to save them all of the trouble that I had to go through just to learn it.

My past experience was an extremely negative event in my life at the time; however, I turned that into something for the better by learning from my mistakes. My present experience is reinforcement to what happen in the past to continue to keep me in line and make sure I don’t fall down the same road again. Both of these experiences molded me as a person and created who I am now, and who I want to be in the future. This is what true education is, learning from life and teaching yourself rather than sitting in a classroom and getting another form of education. I think that education is an extremely important thing in everybody’s life because of the fact that you can turn an extremely negative situation and make it positive by learning from it and not making the same mistake again.